BON TON;

OR,

High Life above Stairs.

A

COMEDY.

IN TWO ACTS.

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL,

IN

DRURY-LANE.

LONDON:

Printed for T. BECKET, the Corner of the Adelphi, in the Strand. 1775.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

THIS little Drama, which had been thrown aſide for many years, was brought out laſt ſeaſon, with ſome alterations, for the benefit of Mr. KING, as a token of regard for one, who, during a long engagement, was never known, unleſs confined by real illneſs, to diſappoint the Public, or diſtreſs the Managers—The Author is ſincerely apprehenſive that the excellence of the performance upon the ſtage, will greatly leſſen its credit with the readers in the cloſet.

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Of rout, F

'Tis plays

'Tis losing

PROLOGUE,

Written by GEORGE COLMAN.

Spoken by Mr. KING.

FASHION in ev'ry thing bears sov'reign sway,
And words and periwigs have both their day:
Each have their purlieus too, are modish each
In stated districts, wigs as well as speech.
The Tyburn *scratch, thick club, and* Temple *tye,*
The parson's feather-top, frizz'd broad and high!
The coachman's cauliflower, built tiers on tiers!
Differ not more from bags and brigadiers,
Than great St. George's, or St. James's stiles,
From the broad dialect of Broad St. Giles.
What is BON TON?—*Oh, damme, cries a buck—*
Half drunk—ask me, my dear, and you're in luck!
Bon Ton's *to swear, break windows, beat the watch,*
Pick up a wench, drink healths, and roar a catch.
Keep it up, keep it up! damme, take your swing!
Bon Ton *is* Life, *my boy; Bon Ton's* the thing!
Ah! I loves life, and all the joys it yields—
Says Madam Fussock, warm from Spital-fields.
Bone Tone's *the space 'twixt Saturday and Monday,*
And riding in a one-horse chair o' Sunday!
'Tis drinking tea on summer afternoons
At Bagnigge-Wells, with China and gilt spoons!
'Tis laying by our stuffs, red cloaks, and pattens,
To dance Cow-tillions, *all in silks and sattins!*
Vulgar! cries Miss. Observe in higher life
The feather'd spinster, and thrice-feather'd wife!
The CLUB's Bon Ton. Bon Ton's *a constant trade*
Of rout, Festino, *Ball and Masquerade!*
'Tis plays and puppet-shews; 'tis something new!
'Tis losing thousands ev'ry night at lu!

Nature

PROLOGUE.

Nature it thwarts, and contradicts all reason;
'Tis stiff French stays, and fruit when out of season!
A rose, when half a guinea is the price;
A set of bays, scarce bigger than six mice;
To visit friends, you never wish to see;
Marriage 'twixt those, who never can agree;
Old dowagers, drest, painted, patch'd, and curl'd;
This is Bon Ton, *and this we call* the world!
* [*True, says my Lord; and thou my only son,*
Whate'er your faults, ne'er sin against Bon Ton!
Who toils for learning at a publick school,
And digs for Greek and Latin is a fool.
French, French, my boy's the thing! jasez! *prate, chatter!*
Trim be the mode, whipt-syllabub the matter!
Walk like a Frenchman! for on English pegs
Moves native aukwardness with two left legs.
Of courtly friendship form a treacherous league;
Seduce men's daughters, with their wives intrigue;
In sightly semicircles round your nails;
Keep your teeth clean—and grin, if small talk fails—
But never laugh, *whatever jest prevails!*
Nothing but nonsense e'er gave laughter birth,
That vulgar way the vulgar shew their mirth.
Laughter's a rude convulsion, sense that justles,
Disturbs the cockles, and distorts the muscles.
Hearts may be black, but all should wear clean faces;
The Graces, boy! the Graces, Graces, Graces!]
Such is Bon Ton! *and walk this city thro',*
In building, scribbling, fighting, and virtù,
And various other shapes, 'twill rise to view.
To-night our Bayes, *with bold, but careless tints,*
Hits off a sketch or two, like Darly's prints.
Should connoisseurs allow his rough draughts strike 'em,
'Twill be Bon Ton *to see 'em and to like 'em.*

* The Lines between Crotchets are omitted at the Theatre.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

M E N.

Lord Minikin,	Mr. Dodd,
Sir John Trotley,	Mr. King,
Colonel Tivy,	Mr. Brereton,
Jeſſamy,	Mr. La Mash,
Davy,	Mr. Parsons,
Mignon,	Mr. Burton.

W O M E N.

Lady Minikin,	Mrs. King,
Miſs Tittup,	Mrs. Abington,
Gymp,	Miſs Platt.

B C

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BON TON;

OR,

High Life above Stairs.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Lady MINIKIN *and Miſs* TITTUP.

Lady MINIKIN.

IT is not, my dear, that I have the leaſt regard for my Lord; I had no love for him before I married him, and you know, Matrimony is no breeder of affection; but it hurts my pride, that he ſhould neglect me, and run after other women.

Miſs TITTUP.

Ha, ha, ha, how can you be ſo hypocritical, Lady Minikin, as to pretend to uneaſineſs at ſuch trifles: but pray have you made any new diſcoveries of my Lord's gallantry?

Lady MINIKIN.

New diſcoveries! why, I ſaw him myſelf yeſterday morning in a hackney coach, with a minx in a pink cardinal; you ſhall abſolutely burn your's, Tittup, for I ſhall never bear to ſee one of that colour again.

Miſs TITTUP.

Sure ſhe does not ſuſpect me (*aſide*). And where was your Ladyſhip, pray, when you ſaw him?

Lady MINIKIN.

Taking the air with Colonel Tivy in his Vis-a-Vis.

Miſs TITTUP.

But, my dear Lady Minikin, how can you be ſo angry that my Lord was hurting your pride, as you call it, in the hackney-coach, when you had him ſo much in your power, in the Vis-a-Vis?

Lady MINIKIN.

What, with my Lord's friend, and my friend's lover! (*takes her by the hand*) O fye, Tittup!

Miſs TITTUP.

Pooh, pooh, Love and Friendſhip are very fine names to be ſure, but they are mere viſiting acquaintance; we know their names indeed, talk of 'em ſometimes, and let 'em knock at our doors, but we never let 'em in, you know. (*looking roguiſhly at her*).

Lady MINIKIN.

I vow, Tittup, you are extremely polite.

Miſs TITTUP.

I am extremely indifferent in theſe affairs, thanks to my education—We muſt marry, you know, becauſe other people of faſhion marry; but I ſhould think very meanly of myſelf, if after I was married, I ſhould feel the leaſt concern at all about my huſband.

Lady MINIKIN.

I hate to praiſe myſelf, and yet I may with truth aver, that no woman of quality ever had, can have, or will have, ſo conſummate a contempt for her Lord, as I have for my moſt honourable and puiſſant Earl of Minikin, Viſcount Perriwinkle, and Baron Titmouſe—Ha, ha, ha!

Miſs

Miſs TITTUP.

But is it not ſtrange, Lady Minikin, that merely his being your huſband, ſhould create ſuch indifference; for certainly, in every other eye, his Lordſhip has great accompliſhments.

Lady MINIKIN.

Accompliſhments! thy head is certainly turn'd; if you know any of 'em, pray let's have 'em; they are a novelty, and will amuſe me.

Miſs TITTUP.

Imprimis, he is a man of quality.

Lady MINIKIN.

Which, to be ſure, includes all the cardinal virtues; —poor girl!—go on!

Miſs TITTUP.

He is a very handſome man.

Lady MINIKIN.

He has a very bad conſtitution.

Miſs TITTUP.

He has wit.

Lady MINIKIN.

He is a Lord, and a little goes a great way.

Miſs TITTUP.

He has great good nature.

Lady MINIKIN.

No wonder—he's a fool.

Miſs TITTUP.

And then his fortune, you'll allow—

Lady MINIKIN.

Was a great one—but he games, and if fairly, he's undone; if not, he deſerves to be hang'd—and ſo, Exit my Lord Minikin—And now, let your wiſe uncle, and my good couſin Sir John Trotley, Baronet, enter: Where is he, pray?

Miſs TITTUP.

In his own room, I ſuppoſe, reading pamphlets and news-papers, againſt the enormities of the times; if he ſtays here a week longer, notwithſtanding my expectations from him, I ſhall certainly affront him.

Lady MINIKIN.

I am a great favourite, but it is impoſſible much longer to act up to his very righteous ideas of things;—Is'n't it pleaſant to hear him abuſe every body, and every thing, and yet always finiſhing with a—*You'll excuſe me*, Couſin?—Ha, ha, ha!

Miſs TITTUP.

What do you think the Goth ſaid to me yeſterday? one of the knots of his Tye hanging down his left ſhoulder, and his fring'd cravat nicely twiſted down his breaſt, and thruſt thro' his gold button hole, which look'd exactly like my little Barbet's head in his gold collar—Niece Tittup, cries he, drawing himſelf up, *I proteſt againſt this manner of conducting yourſelf, both at home and abroad.*—What are your objections, Sir John, anſwered I, a little pertly.—*Various and manifold, reply'd he; I have no time to enumerate particulars now, but I will venture to prophecy, if you keep whirling round in the vortex of Pantheons, Operas, Feſtinos, Coteries, Maſquerades, and all the Devilades in this town, your head will be giddy, down you will fall, loſe the name of Lucretia, and be call'd nothing but Tittup ever after—Youll excuſe me, couſin!*—and ſo he left me.

Lady MINIKIN.

O, the barbarian!

Enter GYMP.

GYMP.

A card your Ladyſhip, from Mrs. Pewitt.

Lady

Lady MIN.

Poor Pewitt!—If ſhe can be but ſeen at public places, with a woman of quality, ſhe's the happieſt of Plebeians.

[*Reads the Card.*]

" Mrs. Pewitt's reſpects to Lady Minikin, and Miſs " Tittup; hopes to have the pleaſure of attending them, " to Lady Filligree's ball this evening.—Lady Daiſey " ſees maſks."—We'll certainly attend her—Gymp, put ſome meſſage cards upon my toilet, I'll ſend an anſwer immediately; and tell one of my footmen, that he muſt make ſome viſits for me to-day again, and ſend me a liſt of thoſe he made yeſterday: he muſt be ſure to call at Lady Pettitoes, and if ſhe ſhou'd unluckily be at home, he muſt ſay that he came to inquire after her ſprain'd ancle.

Miſs TITT.

Ay, ay, give our compliments to her ſprain'd ancle.

Lady MIN.

That woman's ſo fat, ſhe'll never get well of it, and I am reſolv'd not to call at her door myſelf, till I am ſure of not finding her at home.—I am horridly low ſpirited to-day, do, ſend your Colonel to play at cheſs with me, ſince he belong'd to you, Titty, I have taken a kind of liking to him; I like every thing that loves my Titty. (*Kiſſes her.*)

Miſs TITT.

I know you do, my dear Lady. (*Kiſſes her.*)

Lady MIN.

That ſneer I don't like; if ſhe ſuſpects, I ſhall hate her: (*aſide.*) Well, dear Titty, I'll go and write my cards, and dreſs for the maſquerade, and if that won't raiſe my ſpirits, you muſt aſſiſt me to plague my Lord a little. [*Ex.*

Miſs

Miſs TITT.

Yes, and I'll plague my Lady a little, or I am much miſtaken: my Lord ſhall know every tittle that has paſſed: what a poor, blind, half-witted, ſelf-conceied creature, this dear friend and relation of mine is! and what a fine ſpirited gallant ſoldier my Colonel is! my Lady Minikin likes him, he likes my fortune; my Lord likes me, and I like my Lord; however, not ſo much as he imagines, or to play the fool ſo raſhly as he may expect; ſhe muſt be very ſilly indeed, who can't flutter about the flame, without burning her wings—What a great revolution in this family, in the ſpace of fifteen months! —we went out of England, a very aukward, regular, good Engliſh family! but half a year in France, and a winter paſſed in the warmer climate of Italy, have ripen'd our minds to every refinement of eaſe, diſſipation and pleaſure.

Enter Colonel TIVY.

Colonel TIVY.

May I hope, Madam, that your humble ſervant had ſome ſhare in your laſt reverie?

Miſs TITT.

How is it poſſible to have the leaſt knowledge of Colonel Tivy and not make him the principal object of one's reflections.

Colonel TIVY.

That man muſt have very little feeling and taſte, who is not proud of a place in the thoughts of the fineſt woman in Europe.

Miſs TITT.

O fye, Colonel! (*Courtſys and bluſhes.*)

Col. TIVY.

By my honour, Madam, I mean what I ſay.

Miſs

Miſs TITT.

By your honour, Colonel! why will you paſs off your counters to me? don't I know that you fine Gentlemen regard no honour but that which is given at the gaming table; and which indeed ought to be the only honour you ſhou'd make free with.

Colonel TIVY.

How can you, Miſs, treat me ſo cruelly? have I not abſolutely forſworn dice, miſtreſs, every thing ſince I dar'd to offer myſelf to you?

Miſs TITT.

Yes, Colonel, and when I dare to receive you, you may return to every thing again, and not violate the laws of the preſent happy matrimonial eſtabliſhment.

Colonel TIVY.

Give me but your conſent, Madam, and your life to come—

Miſs TITT.

Do you get my conſent, Colonel, and I'll take care of my life to come.

Colonel TIVY.

How ſhall I get your conſent?

Miſs TITT.

By getting me in the humour.

Colonel TIVY.

But how to get you in the humour?

Miſs TITT.

O, there are ſeveral ways; I am very good natur'd.

Colonel TIVY.

Are you in the humour now?

Miſs TITT.

Try me.

Colonel TIVY.

How ſhall I?

Miſs

Miſs TITT.

How ſhall I!—you a ſoldier, and not know the art military?—how ſhall I?—I'll tell you how;—when you have a ſubtle, treacherous, politic enemy to deal with, never ſtand ſhilly ſhally, and loſe your time in treaties and parlies, but cock your hat, draw your ſword;—march, beat drum—dub, dub, a dub—preſent, fire, piff-pauff—'tis done! they fly, they yield—Victoria! Victoria!—(*Running off.*)

Colonel TIVY.

Stay, ſtay, my dear, dear Angel!—(*Bringing her back.*)

Miſs TITT.

No, no, no, I have no time to be kill'd now; beſides, Lady Minikin is in the vapours, and wants you at cheſs, and my Lord, is low ſpirited, and wants me at picquet; my uncle is in an ill humour and wants me to diſcard you, and go with him into the country.

Colonel TIVY.

And will you, Miſs?

Miſs TITT.

Will I!—no, I never do as I am bid; but you ought—ſo go to my Lady.

Colonel TIVY.

Nay, but Miſs.

Miſs TITT.

Nay, but Colonel, if you won't obey your commanding officer, you ſhall be broke, and then my maid won't accept of you; ſo march, Colonel!—look'ee, Sir, I will command before marriage, and do what I pleaſe afterwards, or I have been well educated to very little purpoſe.

[*Exit.*

Colonel TIVY.

What a mad devil it is!—now, if I had the leaſt affection for the girl, I ſhou'd be damnably vext at this!

this!—but ſhe has a fine fortune, and I muſt have her if I can.—Tol, lol, lol, &c. [*Exit ſinging.*

Enter Sir JOHN TROTLEY *and* DAVY.

Sir JOHN.

Hold your tongue, Davy, you talk like a fool.

DAVY.

It is a fine place, your honour, and I cou'd live here for ever!

Sir JOHN.

More ſhame for you:—live here for ever!—what, among thieves and pick-pockets!—what a revolution ſince my time! the more I ſee, the more I've cauſe for lamentation; what a dreadful change has time brought about in twenty years! I ſhou'd not have known the place again, nor the people; all the ſigns that made ſo noble an appearance, are all taken down;—not a bob or tye-wig to be ſeen! all the degrees from the parade in St. James's Park, to the ſtool and bruſh at the corner of every ſtreet, have their hair tied up—the maſon laying bricks, the baker with his baſket, the poſt-boy crying news-papers, and the doctors preſcribing phyſick, have all their hair ty'd up; and that's the reaſon ſo many heads are tied up every month.

DAVY.

I ſhall have my head tied up to-morrow;—Mr. Wiſp will do it for me—your honour and I look like Philiſtines among 'em.

Sir JOHN.

And I ſhall break your head if it is tied up; I hate innovation;—all confuſion and no diſtinction!—the ſtreets now are as ſmooth as a turnpike-road? no rattling and exerciſe in the hackney-coaches; thoſe who ride in 'em are all faſt aſleep; and they have ſtrings in their hands,

that the coachman muſt pull to waken 'em, when they are to be ſet down—what luxury and abomination!

DAVY.

Is it ſo, your honour? 'feckins, I lik'd it hugely.

Sir JOHN.

But you muſt hate and deteſt London.

DAVY.

How can I manage that, your honour, when there is every thing to delight my eye, and cheriſh my heart.

Sir JOHN.

'Tis all deceit and deluſion.

DAVY.

Such crowding, coaching, carting and ſqueezing, ſuch a power of fine ſights, fine ſhops full of fine things, and then ſuch fine illuminations all of a row! and ſuch fine dainty ladies in the ſtreets, ſo civil and ſo graceleſs—they talk of country girls, theſe here look more healthy and roſy by half.

Sir JOHN.

Sirrah, they are proſtitutes, and are civil to delude and deſtroy you: they are painted Jezabels, and they who hearken to 'em, like Jezabel of old will go to the dogs; if you dare to look at 'em, you will be tainted, and if you ſpeak to 'em you are undone.

DAVY.

Bleſs us, bleſs us!—how does your honour know all this!—were they as bad in your time?

Sir JOHN.

Not by half, Davy—In my time, there was a ſort of decency in the worſt of women;—but the harlots now watch like tygers for their prey; and drag you to their dens of infamy—ſee, Davy, how they have torn my neckcloth. *(ſhews his neckcloth)*

DAVY

DAVY.

If you had gone civilly, your honour, they wou'd not have hurt you.

Sir JOHN.

Well, we'll get away as faſt as we can.

DAVY.

Not this month, I hope, for I have not had half my belly full yet.

Sir JOHN.

I'll knock you down, Davy, if you grow profligate; you ſhan't go out again to-night, and to-morrow keep in my room, and ſtay till I can look over my things, and ſee they don't cheat you.

DAVY.

Your honour then won't keep your word with me? (*Sulkily*).

Sir JOHN.

Why, what did I promiſe you?

DAVY.

That I ſhou'd take ſixpen'oth of one of the theatres to-night, and a ſhilling place at the other to-morrow.

Sir JOHN.

Well, well, ſo I did: is it a moral piece, Davy?

DAVY.

O yes, and written by a clergyman; it is call'd the Rival Cannanites, or the Tragedy of Braggadocia.

Sir JOHN.

Be a good lad, and I won't be worſe than my word; there's money for you—(*gives him ſome,*) but come ſtrait home, for I ſhall want to go to bed:

DAVY.

To be ſure, your honour—as I am to go ſo ſoon, I'll make a night of it. (*aſide, and exit.*)

Sir JOHN.

This fellow wou'd turn rake and maccaroni if he was to ſtay here a week longer—bleſs me, what dangers are in this town at every ſtep! O, that I were once ſettled ſafe again at Trotley place!—nothing but to ſave my country ſhou'd bring me back again; my niece Lucretia, is ſo be-faſhioned and be-devill'd, that nothing I fear, can ſave her; however, to eaſe my conſcience, I muſt try; but what can be expected from the young women of theſe times, but ſallow looks, wild ſchemes, ſaucy words, and looſe morals!—they lie a-bed all day, ſit up all night; if they are ſilent, they are gaming, and if they talk, 'tis either ſcandal or infidelity; and that they may look what they are, their heads are all feather, and round their necks are twiſted, rattle-ſnake tippets—O Tempora, O Mores!

LORD MINIKIN *diſcover'd in his powdering gown, with* JESSAMY *and* MIGNON.

Lord MINIKIN.

Pry'thee, Mignon, don't plague me any more; doſt think that a nobleman's head has nothing to do but be tortur'd all day under thy infernal fingers! give me my cloaths.

MIGNON.

Ven you loſs your monee, my Lor, you no goot humour, the devil may dreſs your cheveu for me! [*Exit.*

Lord MINIKIN.

That fellow's an impudent raſcal, but he's a genius, ſo I muſt bear with him. Our beef and pudding enriches their blood ſo much, that the ſlaves in a month, forget their miſery and ſoup-maigre—O, my head!—a chair, Jeſſamy!—I muſt abſolutely change my wine-merchant: I can't taſte his champaigne, without diſordering myſelf for a week!—heigho!—*(ſighs)*.

Enter

Enter Miſs TITTUP.

Miſs TITTUP.

What makes you ſigh, my Lord?

Lord MINIKIN.

Becauſe you were ſo near me, child.

Miſs TITTUP.

Indeed! I ſhou'd rather have thought my Lady had been with you—by your looks, my Lord, I am afraid, Fortune jilted you laſt night.

Lord MINIKIN.

No, faith; our champaigne was not good yeſterday, and I am vapour'd like our Engliſh November; but one glance of my Tittup can diſpel vapours like—like—

Miſs TITTUP.

Like ſomething very fine to be ſure; but pray keep your ſimile for the next time;—and hark'ee—a little prudence will not be amiſs; Mr. Jeſſamy will think you mad, and me worſe. (*half aſide.*

JESSAMY.

O, pray don't mind me, Madam.

Lord MINIKIN.

Gadſo, Jeſſamy, look out my Domino, and I'll ring the bell when I want you.

JESSAMY.

I ſhall, my Lord;—Miſs thinks that every body is blind in the houſe but herſelf. [*aſide, and exit.*

Miſs TITTUP.

Upon my word, my Lord, you muſt be a little more prudent, or we ſhall become the town-talk.

Lord

Lord MINIKIN.

And ſo I will, my dear; and therefore to prevent ſurprize, I'll lock the door. *(Locks it)*

Miſs TITTUP.

What do you mean, my Lord?

Lord MINIKIN.

Prudence, child, prudence; I keep all my jewels under lock and key.

Miſs TITTUP.

You are not in poſſeſſion yet, my Lord: I can't ſtay two minutes: I only came to tell you that Lady Minikin ſaw us yeſterday in the hackney-coach; ſhe did not know me, I believe; ſhe pretends to be greatly uneaſy at your neglect of her; ſhe certainly has ſome miſchief in her head.

Lord MINIKIN.

No intentions, I hope, of being fond of me?

Miſs TITTUP.

No, no, make yourſelf eaſy; ſhe hates you moſt unalterably.

Lord MINIKIN.

You have given me ſpirits again.

Miſs TITTUP.

Her pride is alarm'd that you ſhould prefer any of the ſex to her.

Lord MINIKIN.

Her pride then has been alarm'd ever ſince I had the honour of knowing her.

Miſs TITTUP.

But, dear my Lord, let us be merry and wiſe; ſhould ſhe ever be convinc'd that we have a *tendre* for each other, ſhe certainly wou'd proclaim it, and then—

Lord

Lord MINIKIN.

We ſhou'd be envy'd, and ſhe wou'd be laught at, my ſweet couſin.

Miſs TITTUP.

Nay, I wou'd have her mortify'd too—for tho' I love her Ladyſhip ſincerely, I cannot ſay, but I love a little miſchief as ſincerely: but then if my uncle Trotley ſhou'd know of our affairs, he is ſo old-faſhion'd, prudiſh, and out of the way, he wou'd either ſtrike me out of his will, or inſiſt upon my quitting the houſe.

Lord MINIKIN.

My good couſin is a queer mortal, that's certain; I wiſh we could get him handſomely into the country again—he has a fine fortune to leave behind him—

Miſs TITTUP.

But then he lives ſo regularly, and never makes uſe of a phyſician, that he may live theſe twenty years.

Lord MINIKIN.

What can we do with the Barbarian?

Miſs TITTUP.

I don't know what's the matter with me, but I am really in fear of him; I ſuppoſe, reading his formal books when I was in the country with him, and going ſo conſtantly to church, with my elbows ſtuck to my hips, and my toes turn'd in, has given me theſe fooliſh prejudices.

Lord MINIKIN.

Then you muſt affront him, or you'll never get the better of him.

Sir JOHN TROTLEY. *(Knocking at the door.*

Sir JOHN.

My Lord, my Lord, are you buſy?

(My Lord locks the door ſoftly.

Miſs

Miſs TITTUP.

Heav'ns! 'tis that deteſtable brute, my uncle!

Lord MINIKIN.

That horrid dog, my couſin!

Miſs TITTUP.

What ſhall we do, my Lord? (*Softly.*

Sir JOHN. (*At the door.*

Nay, my Lord, my Lord, I heard you; pray let me ſpeak with you?

Lord MINIKIN.

Ho, Sir John, is it you? I beg your pardon, I'll put up my papers and open the door.

Miſs TITTUP.

Stay, ſtay, my Lord, I wou'd not meet him now for the world; if he ſees me here alone with you, he'll rave like a madman; put me up the chimney; any where.

Lord MINIKIN. (*Aloud.*

I'm coming, Sir John! here, here, get behind my great chair; he ſhan't ſee you, and you may hear all; I'll be ſhort and pleaſant with him.

(*Puts her behind the chair, and opens the door.*

Enter Sir JOHN.

(*During this Scene, my Lord turns the chair as Sir John moves to conceal Tittup.*)

Sir JOHN.

You'll excuſe me, my Lord, that I have broken in upon you? I heard you talking pretty loud; what have you no-body with you? what were you about, couſin? (*Looking about.*

Lord MINIKIN.

A particular affair, Sir John; I always lock myſelf up

to

to ſtudy my ſpeeches, and ſpeak 'em aloud for the ſake of the tone and action.—

Sir JOHN.

Ay, ay, 'tis the beſt way; I am ſorry I diſturb'd you; —you'll excuſe me, couſin!

Lord MINIKIN.

I am rather oblig'd to you, Sir John;—intenſe application to theſe things, ruins my health; but one muſt do it for the ſake of the nation.

Sir JOHN.

May be ſo, and I hope the nation will be the better for't—you'll excuſe me!

Lord MINIKIN.

Excuſe you, Sir John, I love your frankneſs; but why won't you be franker ſtill? we have always ſomething for dinner, and you will never dine at home.

Sir JOHN.

You muſt know, my Lord, that I love to know what I eat;—I hate to travel, where I don't know my way; and ſince you have brought in foreign faſhions and figaries, every thing and every body are in maſquerade; your men and manners too are as much fritter'd and fricaſi'd, as your beef and mutton; I love a plain diſh, my Lord.

Miſs TITTUP. (*peeping.*

I wiſh I was out of the room, or he at the bottom of the Thames.

Sir JOHN.

But to the point;—I came, my Lord, to open my mind to you about my niece Tittup; ſhall I do it freely?

Miſs TITTUP.

Now for it!

Lord MINIKIN.

The freer the better; Tittup's a fine girl, cousin, and deserves all the kindness you can shew her.

(*Lord Minikin and Tittup make signs at each other.*

Sir JOHN.

She must deserve it tho', before she shall have it; and I wou'd have her begin with lengthening her petticoats, covering her shoulders, and wearing a cap upon her head.

Miss TITTUP.

O, frightful! (*aside.*

Lord MINIKIN.

Don't you think a taper leg, and falling shoulders, and fine hair, delightful objects, Sir John?

Sir JOHN.

And therefore ought to be conceal'd; 'tis their interest to conceal 'em; when you take from the men, the pleasure of imagination, there will be a scarcity of husbands; —and then taper legs, falling shoulders and fine hair, may be had for nothing.

Lord MINIKIN.

Well said, Sir John; ha, ha!—your niece shall wear a horseman's-coat, and jack-boots to please you.

Sir JOHN.

You may sneer, my Lord, but for all that, I think my niece in a bad way; she must leave me and the country, forsooth, to travel and see good company and fashions; I have seen 'em too, and wish from my heart, that she is not much the worse for her journey:—you'll excuse me!

Lord MINIKIN.

But why in a passion, Sir John?—

(*My Lord nods and laughs at Miss Tittup, who peeps from behind*)

Don't

Don't you think that my lady and I ſhall be able and willing to put her into the right road?

Sir JOHN.

Zounds! my Lord, you are out of it yourſelf; this comes of your travelling; all the town knows how you and my lady live together; and I muſt tell you—you'll excuſe me!—that my neice ſuffers by the bargain; prudence, my Lord, is a very fine thing.

Lord MINIKIN.

So is a long neckcloth nicely twiſted into a button-hole, but I don't chuſe to wear one;—you'll excuſe me!

Sir JOHN.

I wiſh that he who firſt chang'd long neckcloths, for ſuch things as you wear, had the wearing of a twiſted neckcloth that I wou'd give him.

Lord MINIKIN.

Pry'thee, Baronet, don't be ſo horridly out of the way; prudence is a very vulgar virtue, and ſo incompatible with our preſent eaſe and refinement, that a prudent man of faſhion is now as great a miracle as a pale woman of quality; we got rid of our *mauvais honte*, at the time that we imported our neighbour's rouge, and their morals.

Sir JOHN.

Did you ever hear the like! I am not ſurpriz'd, my Lord, that you think ſo lightly, and talk ſo vainly, who are ſo polite a huſband; your lady, my couſin, is a fine woman, and brought you a fine fortune, and deſerves better uſage.

Lord MINIKIN.

Will you have her, Sir John? She is very much at your ſervice.

Sir JOHN.

Profligate !—What did you marry her for, my Lord ?

Lord MINIKIN.

Convenience !—Marriage is not now-a-days, an affair of inclination, but convenience; and they who marry for love, and ſuch old-faſhion'd ſtuff, are to me as ridiculous as thoſe that advertiſe for an agreeable companion in a poſt-chaiſe.

Sir JOHN.

I have done, my Lord; Miſs Tittup ſhall either return with me into the country, or not a penny ſhall ſhe have from Sir John Trotley, Baronet.

(*Whiſtles and walks about.*

Miſs TITTUP.

I am frighten'd out of my wits!

(*Lord Minikin ſings and ſits down.*)

Sir JOHN.

Pray, my Lord, what huſband is this you have got for her?

Lord MINIKIN.

A friend of mine; a man of wit, and a fine gentleman.

Sir JOHN.

May be ſo, and yet make a damn'd huſband for all that. You'll excuſe me !---What eſtate has he, pray?

Lord MINIKIN.

He's a Colonel; his elder brother, Sir Tan Tivy, will certainly break his neck, and then my friend will be a happy man.

Sir JOHN.

Here's morals!---a happy man when his brother has broke his neck !---a happy man---Mercy on me !

Lord

Lord MINIKIN.

Why he'll have ſix thouſand a year, Sir John—

Sir JOHN.

I don't care what he'll have, nor I don't care what he is, nor who my niece marries; ſhe is a fine lady and let her have a fine gentleman; I ſhan't hinder her; I'll away into the country to-morrow, and leave you to your fine doings; I have no reliſh for 'em, not I; I can't live among you, nor eat with you, nor game with you; I hate cards and dice, I will neither rob nor be robb'd; I am contented with what I have, and am very happy, my Lord, though my brother has not broke his neck;—you'll excuſe me! [*Exit.*

Lord MINIKIN.

Ha, ha, ha! Come, fox, come out of your hole! Ha, ha, ha!

Miſs TITTUP.

Indeed, my Lord, you have undone me; not a foot ſhall I have of Trotley Manor, that's poſitive!—but no matter, there's no danger of his breaking his neck, ſo I'll e'en make myſelf happy with what I have, and behave to him, for the future, as if he was a poor relation.

Lord MINIKIN,

(*kneeling, ſnatching her hand, and kiſſing it.*)

I muſt kneel and adore you for your ſpirit; my ſweet, heavenly Lucretia!

Re-enter Sir JOHN.

Sir JOHN.

One thing I had forgot. (*ſtarts.*

Miſs TITTUP.

Ha! he's here again!

Sir

Sir JOHN.

Why, what the devil;—heigho! my niece Lucretia, and my virtuous Lord, ſtudying ſpeeches for the good of the nation.—Yes, yes, you have been making fine ſpeeches, indeed, my Lord; and your arguments have prevail'd, I ſee. I beg your pardon, I did not mean to interrupt your ſtudies—you'll excuſe me, my Lord!

Lord MINIKIN. (*ſmiling, and mocking him.*)

You'll excuſe me, Sir John!

Sir JOHN.

O yes, my Lord, but I'm afraid the devil won't excuſe you at the proper time—Miſs Lucretia, how do you, child! You are to be married ſoon—I wiſh the gentleman joy, Miſs Lucretia; he is a happy man to be ſure, and will want nothing but the breaking of his brother's neck to be completely ſo.

Miſs TITTUP.

Upon my word, Uncle, you are always putting bad conſtructions upon things; my Lord has been ſolliciting me to marry his friend—and having that moment extorted a conſent from me—he was thanking and wiſhing me joy—in his fooliſh manner. (*hesitating*)

Sir JOHN.

Is that all! but how came you here, child?—did you fly down the chimney, or in at the window? for I don't remember ſeeing you when I was here before.

Miſs TITTUP.

How can you talk ſo, Sir John?—You really confound me with your ſuſpicions;—and then you aſk ſo many queſtions, and I have ſo many things to do, that—that—upon my word, if I don't make haſte, I ſhan't get my dreſs ready for the ball, ſo I muſt run—You'll excuſe me, Uncle! (*Exit running.*)

Sir

Sir JOHN.

A fine hopeful young Lady that, my Lord.

Lord MINIKIN.

She's well-bred and has wit.

Sir JOHN.

She has wit and breeding enough to laugh at her relations, and beſtow favours on your Lordſhip; but I muſt tell you plainly, my Lord—you'll excuſe me—that your marrying your Lady, my couſin, to uſe her ill, and ſending for my niece, your couſin, to debauch her—

Lord MINIKIN.

You're warm, Sir John, and don't know the world, and I never contend with ignorance and paſſion; live with me ſome time, and you'll be ſatisfied of my honour and good intentions to you and your family; in the mean time command my houſe;—I muſt attend immediately Lady Filligree's maſquerade, and I am ſorry you wont make one with us;—here, Jeſſamy, give me my domino, and call a chair; and don't let my uncle want for any thing; you'll excuſe me, Sir John, tol, lol, derol, &c.

(*Exit ſinging.*

Sir JOHN.

The world's at an end! here's fine work; here are precious doings! this Lord is a pillar of the ſtate too; no wonder that the building is in danger with ſuch rotten ſupporters;—heigh ho!—and then my poor Lady Minikin, what a friendand huſband ſhe is bleſs'd with!—let me conſider!—ſhou'd I tell the good woman of theſe pranks, I may only make more miſchief, and may hap, go near to kill her, for ſhe's as tender as ſhe's virtuous;—poor Lady! I'll e'en go and comfort her directly, endeavour to draw her from the wickedneſs of this town into the country, where ſhe ſhall have reading, fowling, and fiſhing, to keep up her ſpirits, and when I die, I will leave her that

part

part of my fortune, with which I intended to reward the virtues of Miſs Lucretia Tittup, with a plague to her! [*Exit.*

Lady MINIKIN'S *Apartments.*

Lady MINIKIN *and Colonel* TIVY *diſcovered.*

Lady MINIKIN.

Don't urge it, Colonel; I can't think of coming home from the maſquerade this evening, tho' I ſhou'd paſs for my niece, it wou'd make an uproar among the ſervants; and perhaps from the miſtake break off your match with Tittup.

Colonel TIVY.

My dear Lady Minikin, you know my marriage with your niece is only a ſecondary conſideration; my firſt and principal object is you—you, Madam!--therefore, my dear Lady, give me your promiſe to leave the ball with me; you muſt, Lady Minikin; a bold young fellow and a ſoldier as I am, ought not to be kept from plunder when the town has capitulated.

Lady MINIKIN.

But it has not capitulated, and perhaps never will; however, Colonel, ſince you are ſo furious, I muſt come to terms, I think—Keep your eyes upon me at the ball, I think I may expect that, and when I drop my handkerchief, 'tis your ſignal for purſuing; I ſhall get home as faſt as I can, you may follow me as faſt as you can; my Lord and Tittup will be otherwiſe employ'd; Gymp will let us in the back way—no, no, my heart miſgives me!

Colonel TIVY.

Then I am miſerable!

Lady

Lady MINIKIN.

Nay, rather than you ſhould be miſerable, Colonel, I will indulge your martial ſpirit; meet me in the field; there's my gauntlet. (*throws down her glove.*)

Colonel TIVY. (*Seizing it.*)

Thus I accept your ſweet challenge; and if I fail you, may I hereafter, both in love and war, be branded with the name of coward. (*Kneels and kiſſes her hand.*)

(*Enter Sir* JOHN, *opening the door.*

Sir JOHN.

May I preſume, couſin.

Lady MINIKIN.

Ha! (*ſqualls.*)

Sir JOHN.

Mercy upon us, what are we at now? (*looks aſtoniſhed.*)

Lady MINIKIN.

How can you be ſo rude, Sir John, to come into a lady's room, without firſt knocking at the door? you have frighten'd me out of my wits!

Sir JOHN.

I am ſure you have frighten'd me out of mine!

Colonel TIVY.

Such rudeneſs deſerves death!

Sir JOHN.

Death indeed! for I ſhall never recover myſelf again! all pigs of the ſame ſtye! all ſtudying for the good of the nation!

Lady MIN.

We muſt ſoothe him, and not provoke him.

[*Half aſide to the Colonel.*]

Colonel TIVY.

I wou'd cut his throat if you'd permit me.

(aſide to Lady Minikin,)

Sir JOHN.

The Devil has got his hoof into the houſe, and has corrupted the whole family; I'll get out of it as faſt as I can, leaſt he ſhou'd lay hold of me too. *(Going.)*

Lady MINIKIN.

Sir John, I muſt inſiſt upon your not going away in a miſtake.

Sir JOHN.

No miſtake, my Lady, I am thoroughly convinced—mercy on me!

Lady MINIKIN.

I muſt beg you, Sir John, not to make any wrong conſtructions upon this accident; you muſt know, that the moment you was at the door—I had promis'd the Colonel no longer to be his enemy in his deſigns upon Miſs Tittup—this threw him into ſuch a rapture—that upon my promiſing my intereſt with you—and wiſhing him joy—he fell upon his knees, and—and—*(laughing)* ha, ha, ha!

Colonel TIVY.

Ha, ha, ha! yes, yes, I fell upon my knees, and—and—

Sir JOHN.

Ay, ay, fell upon your knees and—and—Ha! ha! very good joke faith; and the beſt of it is, that they are wiſhing joy all over the houſe upon the ſame occaſion, and my Lord is wiſhing joy, and I wiſh him joy and you with all my heart.

Lady MINIKIN.

Upon my word, Sir John, your cruel ſuſpicions affect me ſtrongly; and tho' my reſentment is curb'd by my reg

regard, my tears cannot be reſtrain'd; 'tis the only reſource my innocence has left. [*Exit crying*]

Colonel TIVY.

I reverence you, Sir, as a relation to that Lady, but as her ſlanderer I deteſt you: her tears muſt be dried, and my honour ſatisfied; you know what I mean; take your choice;—time, place, ſword or piſtol; conſider it calmly, and determine as you pleaſe; I am a ſoldier, Sir John. [*Exit.*

Sir JOHN.

Very fine, truly! and ſo between the crocodile and the bully, my throat is to be cut; they are guilty of all ſort of iniquity, and when they are diſcover'd, no humility and repentance;—the Ladies have reſource to their tongues or their tears, and the gallants to their ſwords. —That I may not be drawn in by the one, or drawn upon by the other, I'll hurry into the country while I retain my ſenſes, and can ſleep in a whole ſkin. [*Exit.*

The END *of the* FIRST ACT.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter Sir JOHN *and* JESSAMY.

Sir JOHN.

THERE is no bearing this! what a land are we in! upon my word, Mr. Jessamy, you should look well to the house, there are certainly rogues about it: for I did but cross the way just now to the Pamphlet-shop, to buy a touch of the times, and they have taken my hanger from my side; ay, and had a pluck at my watch too, but I heard of their tricks, and had it sew'd to my pocket.

JESSAMY.

Don't be alarm'd, Sir John; 'tis a very common thing, and if you will walk the streets without convoy, you will be pick'd up by privateers of all kinds; ha, ha!

Sir JOHN.

Not be alarm'd when I am robb'd!—why, they might have cut my throat with my own hanger; I shan't sleep a wink all night; so pray lend me some weapon of defence, for I am sure if they attack me in the open street, they'll be with me at night again.

JESSAMY.

I'll lend you my own sword, Sir John; but be assur'd there's no danger; there's robbing and murder cry'd every night under my window; but it no more disturbs me, than the ticking of my watch at my bed's-head.

Sir JOHN.

Sir JOHN.

Well, well, be that as it will, I muſt be upon my guard; what a dreadful place this is! but 'tis all owing to the corruption of the times; the great folks game, and the poor folks rob; no wonder that murder enſues; ſad, ſad, ſad!— well, let me but get over this night, and I'll leave this den of thieves to-morrow; how long will your Lord and Lady ſtay at this maſking and mummery before they come home?

JESSAMY.

'Tis impoſſible to ſay the time, Sir; that merely depends upon the ſpirits of the company and the nature of the entertainment: for my own part, I generally make it myſelf till four or five in the morning.

Sir JOHN.

Why, what the devil do you make one at theſe maſqueradings?

JESSAMY.

I ſeldom miſs, Sir; I may venture to ſay that nobody knows the trim and ſmall talk of the place better than I do; I was always reckon'd an incomparable maſk.

Sir JOHN.

Thou art an incomparable coxcomb, I am ſure. *(aſide.)*

JESSAMY.

An odd, ridiculous accident happen'd to me at a maſquerade three years ago; I was in tip-top ſpirits, and had drank a little too freely of the Champaigne, I believe.

Sir JOHN.

You'll be hang'd, I believe. [*Aſide.*]

JESSAMY.

JESSAMY.

Wit flew about, in ſhort. I was in ſpirits; at laſt, from drinking and rattling, to vary the pleaſure, we went to dancing: and who do you think I danc'd a minuet with? he! he! pray gueſs, Sir John?

Sir JOHN.

Danc'd a minuet with. [*half aſide.*]

JESSAMY.

My own Lady, that's all; the eyes of the whole aſſembly were upon us; my Lady dances well, and I believe, I am pretty tolerable: after the dance, I was running into a little coquetry, and ſmall talk with her.

Sir JOHN.

With your Lady? —Chaos is come again! [*Aſide.*]

JESSAMY.

With my Lady—but upon my turning my hand thus— (*Conceitedly*) egad, ſhe caught me; whiſper'd me who I was; I wou'd fain have laugh'd her out of it, but it wou'd not do;—no, no Jeſſamy, ſays ſhe, I am not to be deceiv'd: pray wear gloves for the future; for you may as well go bare-fac'd, as ſhew that hand and diamond ring.

Sir JOHN.

What a ſink of iniquity!—Proſtitution on all ſides! from the Lord to the pick-pocket: (*aſide.*) Pray, Mr. Jeſſamy, among your other virtues, I ſuppoſe you game a little, eh, Mr. Jeſſamy?

JESSAMY.

A little whiſt or ſo;—but I am ty'd up from the dice; I muſt never touch a box again.

Sir JOHN.

Sir JOHN.

I wish you was ty'd up somewhere else; I sweat from top to toe! (*aside*) Pray lend me your sword, Mr. Jessamy; I shall go to my room; and let my Lord and Lady, and my neice Tittup know, that I beg they will excuse ceremonies, that I must be up and gone before they go to bed; and that I have a most profound respect and love for them, and—that I hope we shall never see one another again as long as we live.

JESSAMY.

I shall certainly obey your commands; what poor ignorant wretches, these country gentlemen are?

[*Aside and Exit.*]

Sir JOHN.

If I stay in this place another day, it wou'd throw me into a fever! Oh I wish it was morning—this comes of visiting my relations!

Enter DAVY, *drunk.*

So, you wicked wretch you—where have you been, and what have you been doing?

DAVY.

Merry-making, your honour—London for ever!

Sir JOHN.

Did not I order you to come directly from the play, and not be idling and raking about?

DAVY.

Servants don't do what they are bid in London.

Sir JOHN.

Sir JOHN.

And did not I order you not to make a jackanapes of yourself, and tye your hair up like a monkey?—

DAVY.

And therefore I did it — no pleasing the Ladies' without this—my Lord's servants call you an old out-of-fashion'd Codger, and have taught me what's what.

Sir JOHN.

Here's an imp of the devil!—he is undone, and will poison the whole country—Sirrah, get every thing ready, I'll be going directly.

DAVY.

To bed, Sir!— I want to go to bed myself, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Why how now—you are drunk too, Sirrah.

DAVY.

I am a little, your honour, because I have been drinking.

Sir JOHN.

That is not all—you have been in bad company, Sirrah!

DAVY.

Indeed, your honour's mistaken, I never kept such good company in all my life.

Sir JOHN.

The fellow does not understand me—where have you been, you drunkard?

DAVY.

Drinking, to be sure, if I am a drunkard; and if you had

had been drinking too, as I have been, you wou'd not be in ſuch a paſſion with a-body—it makes one ſo good-natur'd—

Sir JOHN.

This is another addition to my misfortunes! I ſhall have this fellow carry into the country as many vices as will corrupt the whole pariſh.

DAVY.

I'll take what I can, to be ſure, your Worſhip.

Sir JOHN.

Get away, you beaſt you, and ſleep off the debauchery you have contracted this fortnight, or I ſhall leave you behind, as a proper perſon to make one of his Lordſhip's family.

DAVY.

So much the better—give me more wages, leſs work, and the key of the ale-cellar, and I am your ſervant, if not provide yourſelf with another. *(ſtruts about.)*

Sir JOHN.

Here's a reprobate!—this is the completion of my miſery!—but harkee Villain—go to bed—and ſleep off your iniquity, and then pack up the things, or I'll pack you off to Newgate, and tranſport you for life. [*Exit.*

DAVY.

That for you old Codger *(ſnaps his fingers)*—I know the law better than to be frighten'd with moon-ſhine! I wiſh that I was to live here all my days!—this is life indeed! a Servant lives up to his eyes in clover; they have wages, and board wages, and nothing to do, but to grow fat and ſaucy—they are as happy as their maſter, they play for ever at cards, ſwear like Emperors, drink like fiſhes, and go a wenching with as much eaſe, and tranquility, as if they were going to a ſermon! Oh! 'tis a fine life! [*Exit reeling*]

SCENE. *A Chamber in Lord* MINIKIN'S *House.*

Enter Lord MINIKIN, *and Miss* TITTUP, *in Masquerade dresses, lighted by* JESSAMY.

Lord MINIKIN.

Set down the candles, Jessamy, and shou'd your Lady come home let me know— be sure you are not out of the way.

JESSAMY.

I have liv'd too long with your Lordship, to need the caution— who the Devil have we got now? but that's my Lord's business, and not mine. [*Exit.*]

Miss TITTUP, *(pulling off her mask.)*

Upon my word, my Lord, this coming home so soon from the masquerade is very imprudent, and will certainly be observ'd—I am most inconceiveably frighten'd I can assure you—my Uncle Trotley has a light in his room; the accident this morning will certainly keep him upon the watch—pray, my Lord, let us defer our meetings 'till he goes into the country—I find that my English heart, tho' it has ventur'd so far, grows fearful, and aukward to practise the freedoms of warmer climates—(*my Lord takes her by the hand*) If you will not desist, my Lord—we are separated for ever—the sight of the precipice turns my head, I have been giddy with it too long, and must turn from it while I can --- pray be quiet, my Lord, I will meet you to-morrow.

Lord MINIKIN.

To-morrow! 'tis an age in my situation--- let the weak, bashful, coyish whiner be intimidated with these faint alarms, but let the bold experienced lover kindle

at

at the danger, and like the Eagle in the mid'ſt of ſtorms thus pounce upon his prey. (*takes hold of her*)

Miſs TITTUP.

Dear, Mr. Eagle, be merciful, pray let the poor Pidgeon fly for this once.

Lord MINIKIN.

If I do my Dove, may I be curs'd to have my wife as fond of me, as I am now of thee. (*offers to kiſs her.*)

JESSAMY, (*without knocking at the door.*

My Lord, my Lord!—

Miſs TITTUP. (*Screames.*)

Ha!

Lord MINIKIN.

Who's there?

JESSAMY, (*peeping*).

'Tis I, my Lord, may I come in?

Lord MINIKIN.

Damn the fellow! What's the matter?

JESSAMY.

Nay, not much my Lord—only my Lady's come home.

Miſs TITTUP.

Then I'm undone—what ſhall I do?—I'll run into my own room.

Lord MINIKIN.

Then ſhe may meet you going to her's.

JESSAMY.

There's a dark, deep cloſet, my Lord—Miſs may hide herſelf there.

Miſs TITTUP.

For heaven's ſake put me into it, and when her Ladyſhip's ſafe, let me know my Lord—What an eſcape have I had!

Lord

Lord MINIKIN.

The moment her evil ſpirit is laid, I'll let my angel out *(puts her into the cloſet.)* lock the door on the inſide— Come ſoftly to my room, Jeſſamy—

JESSAMY.

If a board creaks, your Lordſhip ſhall never give me a lac'd waiſtcoat again. *(Exeunt.)*

Enter GYMP *lighting in Lady* MINIKIN, *and Colonel* TIVY, *in Maſquerade dreſſes.*

GYMP.

Pray, my Lady, go no farther with the Colonel, I know you mean nothing but innocence, but I'm ſure there will be blood ſhed, for my Lord is certainly in the houſe— I'll take my Affadavy that I heard—

Col. TIVY.

It can't be I tell you; we left him this moment at the maſquerade—I ſpoke to him before I came out.

Lady MINIKIN.

He's too buſy and too well employ'd to think of home—but don't tremble ſo, Gymp. There is no harm I aſſure you—the Colonel is to marry my Niece, and it is proper to ſettle ſome matters relating to it—they are left to us.

GYMP.

Yes, yes, madam, to be ſure it is proper that you talk together,—I know you mean nothing but innocence— but indeed there will be blood-ſhed.

Col. TIVY.

The Girl's a fool. I have no ſword by my ſide.

GYMP

GYMP.

But my Lord has, and you may kill one another with that—I know you mean nothing but innocence, but I certainly heard him go up the back-ſtairs into his room talking with Jeſſamy.

Lady MINIKIN.

'Tis impoſſible but the girl muſt have fancy'd this—Can't you aſk Whiſp, or Mignon, if their maſter is come in?

GYMP.

Lord, my Lady, they are always drunk before this, and aſleep in the kitchen.

Lady MINIKIN.

This frighten'd fool has made me as ridiculous as herſelf; hark!---Colonel, I'll ſwear there is ſomething upon the ſtairs; now I am in the field I find I am a Coward.

GYMP.

There will certainly be blood-ſhed.

Col. TIVY.

I'll ſlip down with Gymp this back way then. (*going*)

GYMP.

O dear my Lady, there is ſomebody coming up them too.

Col. TIVY.

Zounds! I've got between two fires!

Lady MINIKIN.

Run into the cloſet.

Col. TIVY. (*runs to the cloſet*)

There's no retreat— the door is lock'd!

Lady MINIKIN.

Behind the chimney-board, Gymp.

Col.

Col. TIVY.

I ſhall certainly be taken priſoner (*goes behind the board*) you'll let me know when the enemy's decamp'd.

Lady MINIKIN.

Leave that to me—do you, Gymp, go down the back-ſtairs, and leave me to face my Lord, I think I can match him at hypocriſy. (*ſits down.*)

Enter Lord MINIKIN.

Lord MINIKIN.

What is your Ladyſhip ſo ſoon return'd from Lady Fillagree's ?

Lady MINIKIN.

I am ſure, my Lord I ought to be more ſurpriz'd at your being here ſo ſoon when I ſaw you ſo well entertain'd in a *tete-a-tete* with a Lady in crimſon.--ſuch ſights my Lord, will always drive me from my moſt favourite amuſements.

Lord MINIKIN.

You find at leaſt, that the Lady, whoever ſhe was, cou'd not engage me to ſtay, when I found your Ladyſhip had left the ball.

Lady MINIKIN.

Your Lordſhip's ſneering upon my unhappy temper, may be a proof of your wit, but is none of your humanity, and this behaviour is as great an inſult upon me, as even your falſehood itſelf. (*pretends to weep*)

Lord MINIKIN.

Nay, my dear Lady Minikin; if you arr reſolv'd to play tragedy, I ſhall roar away too, and pull out my cambrick handkerchief.

Lady

Lady MINIKIN.

I think, my Lord, we had better retire to our apartments; my weakneſs, and your brutality will only expoſe us to our ſervants—where is Tittup, pray?—

Lord MINIKIN.

I left her with the Colonel—a maſquerade to young folks, upon the point of matrimony, is as delighful as it is diſguſting to thoſe who are happily married, and are wiſe enough to love home, and the company of their wives. *(takes hold of her hand.)*

Lady MINIKIN.

Falſe man!—I had as lieve a toad touch'd me. *(aſide.*

Lord MINIKIN.

She gives me the friſonne—I muſt propoſe to ſtay, or I ſhall never get rid of her *(aſide.)*—I am quite aguiſh to-night,—he—he—do my dear, let us make a little fire here, and have a family *tete-a-tete*, by way of novelty.

(rings a bell.

Enter JESSAMY.

Let 'em take away that chimney-board, and light a fire here immediately.

Lady MINIKIN.

What ſhall I do? *(aſide.)*—Here, Jeſſamy, there is no occaſion—I am going to my own chamber, and my Lord won't ſtay here by himſelf. *(Exit Jeſſamy.*

Lord MINIKIN.

How cruel it is, Lady Minikin, to deprive me of the pleaſure of a domeſtic duetto—a good eſcape, faith! *(aſide.*

Lady MINIKIN.

I have too much regard for Lord Minikin, to agree to any thing that would afford him ſo little pleaſure—I ſhall retire to my own apartments.

Lord

Lord MINIKIN.

Well, if your Ladyſhip will be cruel, I muſt ſtill, like the miſer, ſtarve and ſigh, tho' poſſeſſed of the greateſt treaſure.—(*bows*) I wiſh your Ladyſhip a good night—

(*He takes one candle, and Lady Minikin the other.*)

may I preſume— (*ſalutes her.*)

Lady MINIKIN.

Your Lordſhip is too obliging—naſty man! (*aſide.*

Lord MINIKIN.

Diſagreeable woman! (*aſide.*)

(*They wipe their lips, and exeunt ceremonioſly.*

Miſs TITTUP. (*peeping out of the cloſet.*)

All's ſilent now, and quite dark; what has been doing here I cannot gueſs—I long to be reliev'd, I wiſh my Lord was come—but I hear a noiſe! (*ſhe ſhuts the door.*

Colonel TIVY. (*peeping over the chimney-board.*)

I wonder my Lady does not come—I would not have Miſs Tittup know of this—'twou'd be ten thouſand pounds out of my way, and I can't afford to give ſo much for a little gallantry.

Miſs TITTUP. (*comes forward.*)

What would my Colonel ſay to find his bride, that is to be, in this critical ſituation.

Enter Lord MINIKIN, *at one door in the dark.*

Lord MINIKIN.

Now to relieve my priſoner. (*comes forward.*

Enter Lady MINIKIN, *at the other door.*

Lady MIN.

My poor Colonel will be as miſerable, as if he were beſieg'd in garriſon, I muſt releaſe him.

(*going towards the chimney.*

Lord MINIKIN.

Hiſt—hiſt!—

Miſs

Miſs TITTUP, *Lady* MINIKIN, *and Colonel* TIVY.

Here! here!—

Lord MINIKIN.

This way.

Lady MIN.

Softly.

(They all grope about till Lord Minikin has got Lady Minikin, and the Colonel Miſs Tittup.)

Sir JOHN. *(ſpeaks without.)*

Light this way, I ſay; I am ſure there are thieves, get a blunderbuſs.

JESSAMY.

Indeed you dreamt it, there is nobody but the family.

(all ſtand, and ſtare.

Enter Sir JOHN, *in his cap, and hanger drawn, with* JESSAMY.

Sir JOHN.

Give me the candle, I'll ferret 'em out I warrant, bring a blunderbuſs, I ſay; they have been ſkipping about that gallery in the dark this half hour; there muſt be miſchief —I have watch'd 'em into this room—ho, ho, are you there?—if you ſtir, you are dead men—*(they retire)*— and *(ſeeing the ladies)* women too!—egad—ha! what's this? the ſame party again! and two couple they are of as choice mortals as ever were hatch'd in this righteous town—you'll excuſe me, couſins! *(they all look confounded.*

Lord MINIKIN.

In the name of wonder, how comes all this about?

Sir JOHN.

Well, but hark'ee, my dear couſins, have you not got wrong partners?—here has been ſome miſtake in the dark; I am mighty glad that I have brought you a candle, to ſet all to rights again—you'll excuſe me, gentlemen and ladies!

Enter GYMP, *with a candle.*

GYMP.

What in the name of mercy, is the matter?

Sir JOHN.

Why the old matter, and the old game, Mrs. Gymp, and I'll match my cousins here at it, against all the world, and I say done first.

Lord MINIKIN.

What is the meaning, Sir John, of all this tumult and consternation? may not Lady Minikin and I, and the Colonel and your niece, be seen in my house together without your raising the family, and making this uproar and confusion?

Sir JOHN.

Come, come, good folks, I see you are all confounded, I'll settle this matter in a moment—as for you Colonel—tho' you have not deserv'd plain dealing from me, I will now be serious—you imagine this young lady has an independent fortune, besides expectations from me—'tis a mistake, she has no expectations from me; if she marry you, and I don't consent to her marriage, she will have no fortune at all.

Colonel TIVY.

Plain dealing is a jewel, and to shew you, Sir John, that I can pay you in kind, I am most sincerely oblig'd to you for your intelligence, and I am, ladies, your most obedient humble servant—I shall see you, my Lord, at the club to-morrow?— (*Exit Col. Tivy.*

Lord MINIKIN.

Sans doute mon cher Colonel—I'll meet you there without fail.

Sir JOHN.

My Lord, you'll have something else to do.

Lord

Lord MINIKIN.

Indeed! what is that, good Sir John?

Sir JOHN.

You muſt meet your lawyers and creditors to-morrow, and be told, what you have always turn'd a deaf ear to, that the diſſipation of your fortune and morals, muſt be followed by years of parſimony and repentance—as you are fond of going abroad you may indulge that inclination without having it in your power to indulge any other.

Lord MINIKIN.

The bumkin is no fool, and is damn'd ſatirical— (*aſide.*

Sir JOHN.

This kind of quarantine for peſtilential minds, will bring you to your ſenſes, and make you renounce foreign vices and follies, and return with joy to your country and property again—read that, my Lord, and know your fate.

(*gives a paper.*

Lord MINIKIN.

What an abomination this is! that a man of faſhion, and a nobleman, ſhall be oblig'd to ſubmit to the laws of his country.

Sir JOHN.

Thank heaven, my Lord, we are in that country!—You are ſilent, ladies—if repentance has ſubdu'd your tongues, I ſhall have hopes of you—a little country air might perhaps do well—as you are diſtreſs'd, I am at your ſervice—what ſay you, my Lady?

Lady MIN.

However appearances have condemn'd me, give me leave to diſavow the ſubſtance of thoſe appearances: My mind has been tainted, but not profligate—your kindneſs and example may reſtore me to my former natural Engliſh conſtitution.

Sir

Sir JOHN.

Will you resign your Lady to me, my Lord for a time?

Lord MINIKIN.

For ever, dear Sir John, without a murmur.

Sir JOHN.

Well, Miss, and what say you?

Miss TITT.

Guilty, uncle. (*curtseying.*)

Sir JOHN.

Guilty! the devil you are? of what?

Miss TITT.

Of consenting to marry one, whom my heart could not approve, and coquetting with another which friendship, duty, honour, morals, and every thing, but fashion, ought to have forbidden.

Sir JOHN.

Thus then, with the wife of one under this arm, and the mistress of another, under this, I sally forth a Knight Errant, to rescue distress'd damsels from those monsters, foreign vices, and *Bon Ton*, as they call it; and I trust that every English hand and heart here, will assist me in so desperate an undertaking—*You'll excuse me, Sirs!*

FINIS.